

Revision of IMO Model Course 3.17 Maritime English. Focus on Maritime English to Auxiliary Personnel

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ABSTRACT: Under the Manila 2010 amendments to the STCW , all crew members on board cruise vessels, mainly those assisting passengers during emergency situations and not only, “should be able to communicate safety-related issues in English or in the language spoken by the passengers and other personnel on board.”

Having in view that navigational and safety communications from ship to shore and vice versa, ship to ship, and on board ships must be precise, simple and unambiguous, so as to avoid confusion and error, besides the need to standardize the language used, there is a growing demand of developing communication skills in English, especially for personnel working on cruise vessels, but also on RORO vessels, yachts and small passenger vessels.

This is the reason why we have designed, developed and are already delivering the “Maritime English for Auxiliary Personnel” course in Specialized Maritime English to auxiliary personnel working on board cruise vessels to develop their ability to communicate with passengers, mainly during an emergency.

The course covers the specific language used to describe the parts of ships, organisation on board ships, all essential safety-related matters and work-specific topics. It also reflects the situations in which auxiliary personnel need to communicate, with each other, with other crew members and with shore side authorities. The final goal of this course is to improve fluency in spoken English in real life situations which, of course, can be both routine and non-routine.

1 INTRODUCTION

The cruise industry has been growing fast in recent years- and so has the size of its ships. The primary purpose of cruise vessels is the entertainment and transport of passengers. To fulfill this purpose, the cruise industry needs seafarers to have competence in English language and this need is not limited to deck and engine personnel but also to personnel with designated safety function(s) (auxiliary personnel).

In reference to the Manila amendments to the STCW, which came into force in January 2012, all personnel working on board a cruise vessel should

be able to communicate in English. This communication must exist not only between crew members but also with passengers and other non-safety personnel, especially in emergency situations, when life is at stake. Captain Sibrand Hassing, during the IMLA-IMEC Conference which took place in Terschelling, the Netherlands, in July 2014, emphasized that “*English is the language of the sea and fundamental for all communication in modern maritime world,...that training has to go beyond STCW, which only regulates safety/security competence.*” The need to go beyond STCW is due to the increase in inspections and reporting which now require more effective verbal communication, more demanding techniques

with regard to speaking and writing skills, which are not included in the current requirements of STCW.

Following the adoption of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, and the IMLA-IMEC Conference, the International Maritime Lecturers' Association (IMLA) Working Group for the revision of IMO's Model Course 3.17, *Maritime English*, during its meeting at Shanghai Maritime University in the second week of October 2014, underlined the fact that the purpose of the IMO model courses is, in IMO's words, "to assist maritime training institutes and their teaching staff in organising and introducing new training courses or in enhancing, updating or supplementing existing training material where the quality and effectiveness of the training courses may be improved." and that the IMO Model Course 3.17, *Maritime English* must be aligned with the STCW Manila Amendments of 2010.

Furthermore, the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) during its second session from 2 to 6 February 2015 noted that 'model courses should assist training providers in developing training programmes for seafarers to meet the requirements of the 2010 Manila Amendments' and "..... should accurately reflect the minimum standards in the STCW Convention and Code". The Sub-Committee gave preliminary consideration to the draft revised model course related to training in *Maritime English* which had been revised/updated consequent to the adoption of the 2010 Manila Amendments to the STCW Convention and Code.

Having in view the requirements regarding English language skills for personnel working on board cruise vessels and the growing number of auxiliary personnel applying for various positions on board cruise vessels in Romanian crewing agencies and following the newly revised IMO Model Course 3.17 – *Maritime English*, CERONAV has already developed the course curriculum in *Maritime English for Auxiliary Personnel* providing direct service to passengers in passenger spaces on passenger ships.

This new course is addressed to personnel working or going to work in the following departments on board passenger vessels, both entry and managerial levels: Beauty Salon/ Spa, Casino, Cruise Staff, Entertainment, Food & Beverage, Galley/Culinary, Gift Shop, Housekeeping or/and Hotel Operations.

The methodology of this course is based on the principles of the Communicative Approach and other methods to language teaching and the course content is adapted to the trainees' needs.

2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR AUXILIARY PERSONNEL

A modern cruise ship is like a floating city, where there are all kinds of job positions available. Some jobs require highly developed professional skills, others don't.

In order to be successfully hired by any cruise ship company, an applicant should be able to communicate in English, have enough experience to perform various cruise ship jobs and understand job specific requirements.

Having in view that navigational and safety communications from ship to shore and vice versa, ship to ship, and on board ships must be precise, simple and unambiguous, so as to avoid confusion and error, besides the need to standardize the language used, there is a growing demand of developing communication skills in English, especially for personnel working on cruise vessels, but also on Ro-Ro vessels, yachts, ferries and small passenger vessels.

Part 2.5 of the revised *Maritime English Model Course* provides a guide for teaching *Specialized Maritime English* for personnel providing direct service to passengers in passenger spaces on passenger ships, to meet the mandatory minimum requirements for the knowledge, understanding and proficiency in English language set out in Section A-V/2 of the STCW Code.

The objectives of this part are:

- 1 develop the trainees' ability to use *Specialized Maritime English* to establish effective communication according to their duties and responsibilities;
- 2 ensure that trainees possess the knowledge, understanding and proficiency in English as set out in the STCW Code;
- 3 to train the trainees for routine and emergency communications;
- 4 promote the language skills for continuing independent learning at sea
- 5 prepare trainees to develop the English language skills that may be used in crowd management and crisis management scenarios;

In addition, according to Table A-V/2 which includes specifications of minimum standards of competence in crisis management and human behaviour, all auxiliary personnel should establish and maintain effective communications, meaning:

- 1 Ability to establish and maintain effective communications, including:
 - the importance of clear and concise instructions and reports;
 - the need to encourage an exchange of information with, and feedback from, passengers and other personnel;
- 2 Ability to provide relevant information to passengers and other personnel during an emergency situation, to keep them apprised of the overall situation and to communicate any action required of them, taking into account:
 - the language or languages appropriate to the principal nationalities of passengers and other personnel carried on the particular route;
 - the possible need to communicate during an emergency by some other means, such as by demonstration, or by hand signals or calling attention to the location of instructions, muster stations, life-saving devices or evacuation routes, when oral communication is impractical;

- the language in which emergency announcements may be broadcast during an emergency or drill to convey critical guidance to passengers and to facilitate crew members in assisting passengers.

Regarding Safety Familiarization Training on board, in order to understand all orders and instructions, all auxiliary crew members should be able to communicate with other persons on board on elementary safety matters and understand safety information symbols, signs and alarm signals.

3 “MARITIME ENGLISH FOR AUXILIARY PERSONNEL” COURSE

3.1 Aims and Objectives

Auxiliary personnel working onboard cruise vessels, and not only, must be able to communicate effectively as required by STCW 2010, i.e. they need to be able to use and understand English in a range of situations.

The “*Maritime English for Auxiliary Personnel*” course is aimed at teaching English at elementary to lower intermediate language level to trainees who are going to or will be working onboard passenger vessels, as promoted in IMO’s Model Course 3.17.

But what does elementary and lower intermediate language level mean?

Elementary level means the trainee is able to use English for very basic, everyday needs but without sustained fluency and with many errors. He/ She has a limited understanding of spoken English, requires a lot of rephrasing, repetition and simplification of language.

Lower intermediate level means that the trainee can communicate satisfactorily about everyday topics with a restricted range of language. He/ She is able to understand native speaker English talking at a measured pace with some rephrasing and repetition. Comprehension is likely to fail under pressure.

The Objectives of the “Maritime English for Auxiliary Personnel” course are:

- to develop trainees’ ability to use English to lower intermediate language level (equivalent to the Council of Europe Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) level B1) that is:

“LISTENING: understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.; understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.

READING: understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language; understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.

SPOKEN INTERACTION: deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken; enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events);

SPOKEN PRODUCTION: connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions; briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans; narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions

WRITING: write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest; write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.”

- to teach basic maritime English, as recommended in the English language guidelines of part B-VI/1 of the STCW Code;
- to improve trainees’ competence in English to the level required by shipping companies, so that candidates be able to successfully pass the job interview and fulfil the requirements of job description on board vessels;
- give trainees wide-ranging opportunities to practice communicating in English for both maritime and general purposes at elementary to lower intermediate language level;
- improve trainees’ competence in English to the level required to being promoted to higher positions, and
- develop trainees’ ability to communicate with passengers during an emergency
- Methodology

The material will be taught according to the principles of Communicative Approach as the principal means of instruction and student learning in combination at times with other approaches such as Content Based Instruction, Task Based Learning and Lexical Approach. That is:

- focus is on communication;
- the emphasis is on content, meaning, relevance and interest;
- genuine, everyday language is emphasized
- teaching is trainee-centred;
- English is taught through English;
- trainees learn by active involvement;
- learning tasks reflect real life communication.

The aim is to have trainees communicate effectively and in a manner appropriate to the context they are working in.

The Task Based Learning (TBL) instruction will help the trainees use the new language in a meaningful way, so that he/she will remember the language adequately. The TBL lesson will be based on the completion of a task and the language studied will reflect the trainees’ needs. For example, the task could be a problem-solving activity, replicating a workplace-style scenario, such as a galley, restaurant, casino or a bar scenario. This type of instruction will help activating useful language and the trainee will be given the opportunity to improve on his/her use of the language in an enjoyable and motivating environment.

In recent times, a trend has emerged in language teaching whereby teachers integrate the acquisition of content on the one hand and development of language competence on the other.

One means of achieving this is by teaching content (e.g. distress radio communications) in English, using language strategies and techniques

that make the content comprehensible to the second language learner.

Content-based instruction (CBI) is intended to foster the integration of language and content, where language is viewed as a "medium for learning content" and content is viewed as a "resource for learning and improving language" (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). According to them:

- trainees are exposed to a considerable amount of language while learning content;
- students are taught useful language that is embedded within relevant discourse contexts rather than as isolated language fragments, and
- the use of coherently developed content sources allows students to call on their own prior knowledge to learn additional language and content material

The Lexical Approach is used with the purpose of raising learners' awareness of the lexical nature of language. Activities of this nature include the following:

- intensive and extensive listening and reading in the target language
- first and second language comparisons and translation
- repetition and recycling of activities to keep words and expressions that have been learned active
- guessing the meaning of vocabulary items from context
- noticing and recording language patterns and collocations
- working with dictionaries and other reference tools
- working with language corpora to research word partnerships, preposition usage, style, and so on

3.2 Course Outline

The "Maritime English for Auxiliary Personnel" course is a "teaching package" developed for personnel providing direct service to passengers in passenger spaces on passenger ships: cleaner, messman, Cabin Steward / Stewardess, Crew Cook Utility, musicians, etc.. It follows the list of competences and areas of KUP (knowledge, understanding and proficiency) as set out in IMO's Model Course 3.17 and in Section A-V/2 of the STCW Code, that is the trainee must be able to use elementary English vocabulary for basic instructions and be able to communicate with a passenger in need of assistance whether or not the passenger and crew member share a common language.

The syllabus consists of 8 units. The first 4 units discuss topics referring to General Maritime English and the next 4 'dive' the trainees into Specialized Maritime English.

Unit 1 identifies and names of the main parts of a passenger vessel in speech and writing; exchanges information about vessels orally; names positions on board; the trainees will be required to ask for and give directions on board and ashore;

Unit 2 asks for and gives personal data. The trainee is taught to understand key questions in listening; he/ she exchanges and notes personal

information and fills out a particular form clearly and accurately with personal information.

Unit 3 describes crew roles and routines on board passenger vessels. The trainee notes ship's call signs correctly from speech; identifies correctly numbers and times in writing and speech; understands and transmits messages using times and the international maritime alphabet; describes key responsibilities according to her/his job description;

Unit 4 describes job responsibilities on board. The trainee exchanges information about current and routine activities on board and ashore; demonstrates understanding of standard orders by explaining their meanings and indicating the correct actions; demonstrates understanding of duties by reading a text and answering questions correctly; uses common vocabulary and verbs to describe work routine according to job description, describes activities currently in progress on board and ashore;

Unit 5 considers instructions on board ship; the trainees should have the ability to recognize the safety symbols and signage on board; introduce the life-saving and fire-fighting appliances to passengers; role-play giving appropriate instructions to passengers in emergency situations.

In unit 6, trainees will role-play the various drills on board ships. They will identify the potential dangers and will explain the need for drills to passengers; will role-play the procedures in emergencies and the use of standard SMCP orders for evacuation and boat drills via the public address system.

Unit 7 discusses human behaviour in emergencies. The trainees will learn the specialized terminology in English to inform the passengers about the emergency situations; to direct the passengers and other personnel to their muster stations; and will reassure passengers in panic.

Unit 8 practises the communication related to crowd and crisis management in an emergency situation. The trainees will learn how to deliver clear and concise decisions in an emergency using the English language; how to communicate information to passengers and other personnel and how to give clear reassuring orders.

4 CONCLUSION

The development of the "Maritime English for Auxiliary Personnel" course will help individuals wishing to work as auxiliary personnel on board cruise vessels, passenger ships, ferries, RORO, yachts to improve their level of English so that they have more chances to pass job interviews, be employed in the desired job, carry out successfully their job responsibilities in the department, sail safe and have chances of promotion.

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